

# NOAA Ship THOMAS JEFFERSON

## Makes A New Friend

Story by AST Debbie Ethridge



A black fin sliced the cold water dead ahead of the NOAA Ship THOMAS JEFFERSON during hydrographic survey operations east of Boston, near Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary. Before long, word circulated amongst the crew: a shark 15-20 feet in length was hanging out around

the northern end of Wildcat Knoll, just south of Tillies Bank. She was soon dubbed "Tillie" by the onboard fan club. One of JEFFERSON's NOAA Corps officers, ENS Matthew Jaskoski, holds Master's and Bachelor's degrees in Marine Biology from the University of Otago, New Zealand and the University of South Carolina, respectively. Jaskoski, who believes the shark was a great white, says, "Its sheer size is the main indicator. Its spade-shaped head with wide set eyes and narrower nose, ash grey uniform coloration with no striation, and its dorsal and tail fin are very characteristic of a great white."

JEFFERSON's July and August survey of Wildcat Knoll was in response to a request from National Marine Sanctuaries. The area may require marine protection in the future and the survey will help determine needs. Tillie's daily swims past the ship, as if unaware of its presence, upstaged the many whales sighted and reported to NOAA Fisheries. But that's another story.

